IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

19 Larch Circle	: :
Holland, PA 18966	: CIVIL ACTION
Plaintiff,	: : No
v.	:
NAZARETH HOSPITAL	: : JURY TRIAL DEMANDED
2601 Holme Avenue	:
Philadelphia, PA 19152	:
and	:
MERCY HEALTH SYSTEM	:
One West Elm Street, Suite 100	:
Philadelphia, PA 19428	:
Defendant.	: : :

CIVIL ACTION COMPLAINT

Plaintiff, by and through her undersigned counsel, hereby avers as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1. This action has been initiated by Charissa Bermingham (hereinafter referred to as "Plaintiff," unless indicated otherwise) against Nazareth Hospital and Mercy Health System (hereinafter collectively referred to as "Defendants" unless indicated otherwise) for violations of the Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA" - 29 U.S.C. §§ 2601 et. seq.), the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA" - 42 USC §§ 12101 et. seq.), and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act ("PHRA" - 43 P.S. §§ 951 et. seq.). As a direct consequence of Defendants' unlawful actions, Plaintiff seeks damages as set forth herein.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

2. This Court has original subject matter jurisdiction over the instant action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1343(a)(4) because it arises under the laws of the United States and

seeks redress for violations of federal laws. There lies supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiff's state-law claims because they arise out of the same common nucleus of operative facts as Plaintiff's federal claims asserted herein.

- 3. This Court may properly maintain personal jurisdiction over Defendants because their contacts with this state and this judicial district are sufficient for the exercise of jurisdiction over Defendants to comply with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice, satisfying the standard set forth by the United States Supreme Court in *International Shoe Co. v. Washington*, 326 U.S. 310 (1945) and its progeny.
- 4. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1391(b)(1) and (b)(2), venue is properly laid in this district because all of the acts and/or omissions giving rise to the claims set forth herein occurred in this judicial district, and Defendant is deemed to reside where it is subject to personal jurisdiction, rendering Defendants residents of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

PARTIES

- 5. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
 - 6. Plaintiff is an adult individual, with an address as set forth in the caption.
- 7. Defendant Nazareth Hospital is a non-profit entity organized under the laws of Pennsylvania which operates a hospital in Philadelphia, PA.
- 8. Defendant Mercy Health System is the largest Catholic healthcare system serving the Delaware Valley, which owns and operates many hospitals, including Defendant Nazareth Hospital.
- 9. Upon information and belief, because of their interrelation of operations, common ownership or management, centralized control of labor relations, common ownership or financial

2.

controls, and other factors, Defendants are sufficiently interrelated and integrated in their activities, labor relations, ownership and management that they may be treated as a single and/or joint employer for purposes of the instant action.

- 10. At all times relevant herein, Defendants acted by and through their agents, servants, and employees, each of whom acted at all times relevant herein in the course and scope of their employment with and for Defendants.
- 11. Defendants have and continue to employ over 50 employees per calendar year for at least the last 5 years, and Defendants engage in a variety of business relationships generating revenue by engaging in the healthcare industry.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

- 12. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 13. Plaintiff worked for Defendants for approximately 3 years as a Director of Nursing until Defendants ultimately terminated her employment on or about April 8, 2013 (discussed further *infra*).
- 14. Plaintiff has and continues to suffer from various disabilities including but not limited to Lyme disease.
- 15. Plaintiff's aforementioned disabilities limit her from enjoying several major life activities including but not limited to at times working, performing manual tasks, and other activities.
 - 16. Plaintiff's daughter, for who she cares, also suffers from Lyme disease.
- 17. Plaintiff's daughter was diagnosed with Lyme disease in or about the year of 2011.

- 18. In or about 2012, Plaintiff applied for intermittent leave pursuant to the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to care for her daughter's Lyme disease.
- 19. Plaintiff infrequently took intermittent time off from work to care for her daughter's Lyme disease following her FMLA certification.
 - 20. Plaintiff herself was diagnosed with Lyme disease in or about January of 2013.
- 21. In or about January of 2013, Plaintiff applied for intermittent leave pursuant to the FMLA for her own serious health conditions.
- 22. On or about February 4, 2013, Plaintiff's aforementioned applications were approved for intermittent FMLA leave.
- 23. Plaintiff took intermittent time off from work due to flare ups and/or doctor's appointments over the remaining two months of her employment.
- 24. During the last several months of Plaintiff's employment, Plaintiff performed both the duties of the Director of Nursing and many duties that were meant to be done by Defendants' administrator because the previous administrator had separated from Defendant.
- 25. Although one of Defendant's corporate employees was named "acting administrator," that employee retained many corporate duties and was not often present, leaving many of those administrative duties to Plaintiff.
- 26. On or about March 18, 2013, Plaintiff's physician provided a note to Defendants explaining that Plaintiff would be temporarily restricted to working five (5) hours per day.
- 27. On or about March 22, 2013, Plaintiff requested that she be permitted to work from 8am-1pm in light of her five (5) hour working restriction from her physician, but Defendant's management told Plaintiff that she would only be permitted to work 12pm to 5pm or 1pm to 6pm.

- 28. Plaintiff informed Defendants' management that wanted to take the day off from work on or about March 29, 2013, and Defendants' acting administrator asked Plaintiff if it was "really necessary" for her to take the day off, displaying animosity to Plaintiff's needs for time off.
 - 29. On or about April 8, 2013, Defendants terminated Plaintiff's employment.
- 30. Defendants told Plaintiff that she was terminated due to a "restructuring of leadership."
 - 31. Only two positions were affected by the alleged "restructuring."
- 32. The only position (other than Plaintiff's) affected by the alleged restructuring was the aforementioned administrator position for which Plaintiff was also performing many of the job duties.
- 33. Following the alleged restructuring, the aforementioned "acting administrator" (other than Plaintiff) returned to the corporate office full time.
- 34. Defendants did not offer any alternative positions to Plaintiff following the purported restructuring, even though Defendants had other vacant positions within for which Plaintiff was qualified.
- 35. Upon information and belief, Plaintiff was the only employee terminated pursuant to the alleged restructuring.
- 36. Plaintiff performed her job satisfactorily for approximately three years, requested and utilized medical leaves from Defendants, disclosed to and confided in management of Defendants her health condition(s), and was terminated shortly after taking such leaves and providing such disclosure(s).

- 37. Defendants told Plaintiff that she was terminated as part of a restructuring, but Plaintiff was the only employee who was terminated due to the alleged restructuring. She was also subjected to some animosity and selective treatment leading up to her termination, indicating an intent to discriminate against her.
- 38. Plaintiff believes and therefore avers that Defendants' proffered reason for termination was pretextual and that Defendants truly terminated Plaintiff's employment because of her disabilities, her requests for medical leave, and/or her use of medical leave.

COUNT I <u>Violations of the Family & Medical Leave Act ("FMLA")</u> (Interference & Retaliation)

- 39. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
 - 40. Plaintiff was employed with Defendant for over one year.
 - 41. Plaintiff had worked over 1250 hours in the previous year.
- 42. Plaintiff took, applied for and was approved for FMLA leave based on both her and her daughter's serious health conditions.
- 43. Plaintiff utilized the FMLA leave and in March even began to use it on a daily basis.
- 44. Defendants' management terminated Plaintiff in exceedingly close proximity to her requests and use of FMLA qualify leave.
- 45. Defendants' management also attempted to dissuade Plaintiff from utilizing FMLA leave.
- 46. Plaintiff therefore believes that she was terminated for FMLA qualifying absences, because she engaged in protected activity seeking FMLA leave, and/or or to prevent

her from taking further FMLA leave in the future, actions which constitute interference and retaliation.

COUNT II

<u>Violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA", as amended)</u> (Discrimination & Retaliation)

- 47. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 48. Plaintiff properly exhausted her administrative remedies before proceeding in this Court for violations of the ADA by timely filing a Charge with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC") and by filing the instant Complaint within 90 days of receiving a notice of case closure and/or right-to-sue letter.
- 49. Plaintiff was terminated by Defendant because of: (1) her known health conditions; (2) her perceived health conditions; and/or (3) due to her record of impairment.
- 50. Plaintiff was also terminated in retaliation for requesting and utilizing medical accommodations from Defendant (in the form of intermittent time off from work and a reduced work schedule).
- 51. These actions as aforesaid constitute unlawful discrimination and retaliation under the ADA, as amended.

COUNT III

<u>Violations of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act ("PHRA")</u> (Discrimination & Retaliation)

- 52. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 53. Plaintiff properly exhausted her administrative remedies before proceeding in this Court for violations of the PHRA by timely filing a Charge with the Pennsylvania Human

Relations Commission ("PHRC") and by filing the instant Complaint after letting the Charge remain with the PHRC for one (1) year.

54. Plaintiff re-asserts and re-alleges every allegation of Count II as they also constitute identical violations of the PHRA.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that this Court enter an Order providing that:

- A. Defendants are to compensate Plaintiff, reimburse Plaintiff, and make Plaintiff whole for any and all pay and benefits Plaintiff would have received had it not been for Defendants' illegal actions, including but not limited to back pay, front pay, salary, pay increases, bonuses, insurance, benefits, training, promotions, reinstatement, and seniority.
- B. Plaintiff is to be awarded punitive and/or liquidated damages, as permitted by applicable law, in an amount believed by the Court or trier of fact to be appropriate to punish Defendants for their willful, deliberate, malicious and outrageous conduct and to deter Defendants or other employers from engaging in such misconduct in the future;
- C. Plaintiff is to be accorded other equitable and legal relief as the Court deems just, proper, and appropriate (including but not limited to damages for emotional distress / pain and suffering);
- D. Plaintiff is to be awarded the costs and expenses of this action and reasonable attorney's fees as provided by applicable federal and state law.
- E. Plaintiff is to be given a jury trial as demanded in the caption of the instant Complaint.

Respectfully submitted,

KARPF, KARPF & CERUTTI, P.C.

By:

Ari R. Karpf, Esq.
3331 Street Road
Two Greenwood Square, Suite 128
Bensalem, PA 19020
(215) 639-0801

Dated: April 28, 2014

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

CASE MANAGEMENT TRACK DESIGNATION FORM

CHARISSA BERMINGHAM	:	CIVIL ACTION	
v.	•		٠
NAZARETH HOSPITAL, et al.	•	NO.	
filing the complaint and serve a copy side of this form.) In the event the designation, that defendant shall we	agement Track Design y on all defendants. (in the adefendant does with its first appearance Case Management T	y Reduction Plan of this court, coung praction Form in all civil cases at the table § 1:03 of the plan set forth on the range of a not agree with the plaintiff regarding, submit to the clerk of court and set ack Designation Form specifying the greed.	ime o evers g sai
SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLO	WING CASE MANA	AGEMENT TRACKS:	
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Attorney-at-law

E-Mail Address

akarpf@karpf-law.com

Attorney for

(Civ. 660) 10/02

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA — DESIGNATION FORM to be used by counsel to indicate the category of the case for the purpose of assignment to appropriate calendar. Address of Plaintiff: 19 Larch Circle, Holland, PA 18966 Address of Defendant: 2601 Holme Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19152; One West Elm St, Suite 100, Philadelphia, PA 19428 Place of Accident, Incident or Transaction: Defendants place of business (Use Reverse Side For Additional Space) Does this civil action involve a nongovernmental corporate party with any parent corporation and any publicly held corporation owning 10% or more of its stock? (Attach two copies of the Disclosure Statement Form in accordance with Fed.R.Civ.P. 7.1(a)) Does this case involve multidistrict litigation possibilities? YesD RELATED CASE, IF ANY: Case Number: Date Terminated: Civil cases are deemed related when yes is answered to any of the following questions: 1. Is this case related to property included in an earlier numbered suit pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court? 2. Does this case involve the same issue of fact or grow out of the same transaction as a prior suit pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court? Yes□ No 3. Does this case involve the validity or infringement of a patent already in suit or any earlier numbered case pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court? 4. Is this case a second or successive habeas corpus, social security appeal, or pro se civil rights case filed by the same individual? No□ CIVIL: (Place / in ONE CATEGORY ONLY) A. Federal Question Cases: B. Diversity Jurisdiction Cases: 1. D Insurance Contract and Other Contracts 1. □ Indemnity Contract, Marine Contract, and All Other Contracts 2. D FELA 2.

Airplane Personal Injury 3. D Jones Act-Personal Injury 3. D Assault, Defamation 4. □ Antitrust 4. D Marine Personal Injury 5, D Patent 5. D Motor Vehicle Personal Injury 6. □ Labor-Management Relations 6. D Other Personal Injury (Please specify) 7. X Civil Rights 7. Products Liability 8.

Habeas Corpus 8. Products Liability - Asbestos 9. D Securities Act(s) Cases 9. D All other Diversity Cases 10. ☐ Social Security Review Cases (Please specify) 11. □ All other Federal Question Cases (Please specify) ARBITRATION CERTIFICATION (Check Appropriate Category) ı, Ari R. Karpf counsel of record do hereby certify: Pursuant to Local Civil Rule 53.2, Section 3(c)(2), that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the damages recoverable in this civil action case exceed the sum of \$150,000.00 exclusive of interest and costs; □ Relief other than monetary damages is sought. Attorney-at-Law NOTE: A trial de novo will be a trial by jury only if there has been compliance with F.R.C.P. 38. I certify that, to my knowledge, the within case is not related to any fase now pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court Attorney I.D.# 91538 Attorney-at-Law CIV. 609 (5/2012)

SUSCIAL (Rev. 12/07, NJ 5/08) Case 2:14-cv-02432-MSCIL DOGUMENT SHEET 04/28/14 Page 12 of 12

The JSA4 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating

the civil docket sheet. (SEET I. (a) PLAINTIFFS	NSTRUCTIONS ON THE REVERSE OF THE FORM.)	DEFENDANTS	
***	CILA DIGG A	NAZARETH HOSPITAL, et al.	
BERMINGHAM,			
(b) County of Residence	e of First Listed Plaintiff Bucks	County of Residence of First Listed Defendant Philadelphia	
	ame, Address, Telephone Number and Email Ad	NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE	
	erutti, P.C., 3331 Street Road, Square, Suite 128, Bensalem,	LAND INVOLVED.	
	639-0801, akarpf@karpf-law.co		
II. BASIS OF JURISI	• d	III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES(Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff (For Diversity Cases Only) and One Box for Defendant)	
☐ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff	3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)	PTF DEF Citizen of This State D 1	
☐ 2 U.S. Government Defendant	 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III) 	Citizen of Another State	
		Citizen or Subject of a 3 3 Foreign Nation 6 6 6	
IV. NATURE OF SUI	T (Place an "X" in One Box Only)	ngererrungsackerieterden bestemt von der	
☐ 110 Insurance ☐ 120 Marine ☐ 130 Miller Act ☐ 140 Negotiable Instrument ☐ 150 Recovery of Overpayment	PERSONAL INJURY 310 Airplane 315 Airplane Product Liability 320 Assault, Libel & Slander Slander 330 Federal Employers' Liability 340 Marine 345 Marine Product Liability 345 Morry Vehicle Product Liability 355 Motor Vehicle Product Liability 355 Motor Vehicle Product Liability 385 Property Damag	Comparison Com	
V. ORIGIN Original Proceeding Original Original State Court Original Original Original State Court Original Original Original State Court Original Original Original Original State Court Original			
VII. REQUESTED IN	Violations of the FMLA, AD. CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION		
COMPLAINT:	UNDER F.R.C.P. 23	JURY DEMAND: Yes D No	
VIII. RELATED CASE	E(S) (See instructions): JUDGE	DOCKET NUMBER	
Explanation: A ZO ZOH DATE	SIGNATURE	OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD	
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